

# **NENTHEAD MINES CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number 1166281

14 Kirk Rise, Frosterley, Bishop Auckland, DL13 2SF

## **TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2020**

### **Trustees 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

Sheila Barker, Christopher Chilton, Rachel Chilton, Graham Derbyshire, Nicholas Green, Andy Hopkirk, Peter Jackson, Martyn Langley, Rosemary Vidler, Colin Wilkinson

### **Other Trustees during the year**

Steve Dickinson. Resigned on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019

## **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The Charity was registered on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation using the Charities Commission model document. The document is published on the Society's website and is available from the principal office.

The members present at the meeting appoint trustees at the Annual General meeting of the Society. The Trustees may also appoint other Trustees during the year but their appointment is only valid until the next Annual General Meeting. During this year the Trustees appointed Rachel Chilton in order that the Society would benefit from her skills and knowledge.

The Trustees held three meetings in this year.

The Trustees have set up Working Groups in order to handle the detail of regular operations. The objectives are to involve more people in discussions, allowing timely decision-making, and allow the Trustees meetings to be focussed on strategic decision-making.

The Site Working Group plans, coordinates and arranges the management of the maintenance and conservation of the structures within the Nenthead Mines site.

The Visitor Working Group works to improve the experience of visitors to the Nenthead Mines site.

The Archive Working Group reviews, indexes and manages our collection of site documents, photographs, historic documents and mine plans.

The Membership Committee reviews and decides membership applications.

Andy Hopkirk, Trustee, is the Meetings Secretary and maintains the records of Trustees meetings

The Treasurer maintains the accounts of the Charity and, in partnership with the Trustees, accepts and makes payments. Anne Hopkirk is the Treasurer and is not a Trustee.

The Volunteer Coordinator manages Members Working Days and coordinates Public and Group Visitor Days. Joyce Jackson is the Coordinator and is not a Trustee.

The Trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charities Commission.

## **CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES**

The objects of the CIO are to advance the education of the public about mining, quarrying and smelting at Nenthead and in the North Pennines by

Researching, restoring, maintaining, owning and exploring the historic and natural features relating to mining, quarrying and smelting at Nenthead and adjacent mining areas;

Encouraging and advocating the conservation of the remains of the mining, quarrying and smelting industries; and conservation of the geological features and natural environment, both above and below ground level;

Undertaking archaeology projects,

Recording and archiving information, and

Sharing available information with the public.

## **ACHIEVING THE CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIETY**

### **PROTECTING THE SOCIETY INTERESTS IN THE NENTHEAD MINES SITE**

#### **NENTHEAD MINES AND BROWNLEY HILL L LEVEL SITES**

Discussions continued through the year about a possible lease or freehold transfer of the sites from Cumbria County Council. The Trustees submitted a formal Expression of Interest in taking over the sites, including Brownley Hill Low level entrance, and in August 2017 we were invited to provide an application and Business Plan for a Community Asset Transfer. Our Business Plan was submitted on 14 June 2018.

On 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the County Council resolved that there should be a “freehold transfer of the land at Nenthead for nil consideration.”

The County Council minuted that the key benefit to NMCS was that “this Community Asset Transfer would allow NMCS to have the confidence to make longer term plans for and commitments to the conservation of the Nenthead Mines site. The current arrangements gave NMCS no formal or lasting rights to utilize the Site, and as such NMCS’s investment of time, effort and money in the site was being done without any security that these investments would yield a return in terms of better conservation, education and access to the site in years to come. Furthermore, ownership of the Site

would allow NMCS to apply for grants to finance larger scale conservation and education projects at the Site”.

The Trustees have appointed Ian Shuttleworth as Solicitor, of Hodgson and Angus Solicitors, Stanhope, Durham. Transfer arrangements were delayed by the impact of the Covid 19 epidemic.

#### BREWERY SHAFT SITE

The Trustees have previously agreed a peppercorn rent and a tenants repairing lease with Brewery Shaft Ltd.

## PROVIDING EDUCATION AND OPEN DAYS

#### PUBLIC OPEN DAYS

Date	Number of visitors underground
21.4.19	63
26.5.19	63
23.6.19	34
3.7.19	20
14.7.19	46
24.7.19	36
4.8.19	41
14.8.19	37
25.8.19	47
28.8.19	43
15.9.19	58
22.9.19	23
27.10.19	37
Totals	548

We offered 5 trips on each Open Day and occasionally ran 6 trips.  
We had approximately 120 other visitors on site who did not go underground on Open Days.

## PRIVATE GROUP VISITS

Date	Group	Numbers
30.3.19	Photo Workshop	14
13.4.19	Society of Antiquaries	11
21.4.19	Stanbury Village School	17
23.5.19	Weardale Society	12
29.5.19	Bardon Mill History Group	12
8.6.19	Individual	1
15.6.19	Drystone Walling association	15
17.6.19	Newcastle Mining Institute	14
20.6.19	Gateshead Cheder	15
6.7.19	AONB Photo Workshop	13
13.7.19	Cumberland Geological Society	19
28.7.19	Northern Mines Research Soc.	8
1.8.19	Wetherby U3A Geology Group	10
4.9.19	Bendrigg Trust	17
10.10.19	Newcastle University	38
23.10.19	Geopark Sight Service Group	8
24.10.19	AONB Skywatch	25
	Total	249

## APPROVED MINE ROUTES

We are members of the scheme that manages and finances an engineer's report for certain routes into Smallcleugh and Rampgill Levels. The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority requires the reports where commercial operators take groups of young people into abandoned mines. The reports are also used for organised trips by adults. Our intention is to eventually offer trips into Smallcleugh Mine. A small group of members have volunteered to undertake the required training to qualify for the Local Cave and Mine Leader Assessment scheme. Training continued during the year.

**MAINTAINING THE NENTHEAD MINES SITE**

On 62 days throughout the year, members have been working on site. 36 members provided over 2800 hours of their time to work on site maintenance.

During the year, a free-standing Clothes Drying Room was completed within the ground floor area of the Barracks building. A similar structure was proposed for the Office within the ground floor and the existing office and walls were removed.

Following the removal of the office structures, the ground floor of The Barracks building was flooded during rainstorms in February 2020. The flood water submerged the ground floor to a depth of at least 20mm. The floor consists of stone slabs on a sand base laid on a thin concrete layer, with an

underlying polystyrene insulation layer, which rests on a concrete base. Emergency excavations were carried out to improve drainage outside the building and to divert water away from the site. Rehabilitation work continued after March 2020.

Dismantling of the Power of Water structure continued during the year and this was almost complete prior to the start of the lockdown of work caused by the Covid19 epidemic. Steel fencing and timber from the Power of Water has been used to replace part of the fence surrounding the Smelting Mill and this work was also halted by the Covid 19 lockdown.

Sections of the water leat within the Stamp Mill site have been filled with broken stone purchased from Alston Natural Stone Ltd.

The platform forming the exit walkway from Carrs Mine had been damaged in the winter of 2018-19. The walkway and railings were repaired during April 2019.

We replaced several signs around the site, including the large signboard adjacent to the road between Nenthead and Overwater.

We welcomed a visit by the Cumbria branch of the Drystone Walling Association during June 2019. This group spent two days repairing part of the boundary wall on the east side of the village car park.

Cumbria County Council agreed to finance work to repair the collapsed river wall adjacent to the Stamp Mill site. Legislation governing work in rivers prevented this work starting during 2019. We discussed with the Environment Agency our plans to arrange this work during 2020 but the Covid 19 epidemic prevented work starting by the end of the March 2020.

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COMPLEMENTARY ORGANISATIONS**

The Society is a member of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (AONB). We are represented on the Geopark Advisory Group and the Historic Environment Working Group.

We have worked with the AONB in the 5GRIT project, which is trialling a smartphone app- based approach to Heritage interpretation. We presently have experimental 4G broadband hubs in the Barracks and Carrs Mine shop, which are funded by the North Pennines AONB. When they work, these hubs facilitate work on site, including allowing visitors to pay by card. There have been periods when this service was not available.

We have continued our membership of the National Association of Mining History Organisations. We have also continued our membership of the Alston Moor Business Association during this year.

Nenthead Chapel Enterprise Ltd opened the rebuilt Chapel in August 2019. We held meetings with the manager and supported joint activities with the Chapel and Nenthead Village Hall.

Julie and Phil Jones of Mill Cottage provide the electricity supply for Brewery Shaft.

## **WORKING WITH HISTORIC ENGLAND**

The majority of the Nenthead Mines site is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Legal consents are required for many operations on site. During the year we have maintained a working relationship with the Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments for the North West region.

## **WORKING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

We have continued to assist the Environment Agency (EA) and the Coal Authority (CA) with their work on methods of treating the minewater pollution in the River Nent at Nenthead.

The siting of water treatment facilities is a contentious issue, especially for people living nearby. We have not made any comment on the suitability of proposed sites, other than any consideration of their heritage status and historic value. The Trustees' view continues to be that the heritage and legal status of the mines should be protected and that access to the mines for leisure purposes should not be obstructed.

The Coal Authority, working on behalf of the EA, has started examining possible sites for Caplecleugh Level mine water treatment. We have joined several meetings with managers and engineers and it is possible that the preferred location for the treatment plan may be to the south east of Handsome Mea reservoir. During the year, the EA have arranged investigations into the ground conditions at this location. Whichever location is preferred by the EA and CA, the proposal will require public consultation.

## **WORKING WITH THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE**

The operation of Carrs Mine requires that we comply with the law including the Mines Regulations 2014. We have maintained our working relationship with the principal Mines Inspector.

## **DEVELOPING, SHARING AND MAINTAINING ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS**

The Archives Working Group has completed the catalogue of our document collection and has started work on the photograph collection. During the year we had a small number of enquiries about the collection. The catalogues of the collections are now published on the society website.

## **ENCOURAGING AND DEVELOPING MEMBERSHIP**

We had 145 paid-up members 31 March 2020. We have invested time and money in developing an on-line membership application process and work has continued to facilitate an on-line renewal process.

## **FINANCE**

The cash account report for the year follows at the end of this document.

The Trustees have taken the view that repairs will be required to the site buildings, if the Society becomes the leaseholder or freeholder of the site. We have therefore continued to accumulate funds that should be sufficient to provide for major essential repairs.

Society members and visitors have continued to give generous donations during the year.

### **RESERVES POLICY**

In September 2018 the Trustees adopted a reserves policy.

The policy states “NMCS aims to maintain sufficient reserves to finance 12 months routine operating expenditure and an appropriate long-term program of maintenance of the Nenthead Mines site. The site includes many industrial structures and natural features, which requires regular maintenance, some of which is programmed and some of which is reactive. The level of such work and the expenditure thereon will vary from year to year. Some maintenance requirements may well require resources, which are larger than NMCS alone can sustain. In such a case NMCS will seek support from other organisations and grant making bodies to allow the Nenthead Mines site to remain a valuable, healthy and accessible location rich in mining history, industrial heritage and natural resources”.

**Financial Report 1 Apr 2019 – 31 Mar 2020****Income**

2019/20	Totals	
Public and Private Groups	£ 6196.77	Open Days' Takings & Private Group visits, Events
Assay House	£ 3,246.43	Income from Bunkhouse rental
Membership	£ 1,620.00	
Donations	£ 1,763.35	includes small general donations, drying room work.
Other Income	£ 554.85	Book etc. sales and one-offs
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 13,381.40</b>	

**Expenditure**

2019/20	Totals	
Maintenance	£ 3,992.06	All maintenance on site
Club Insurance (BCA)	£ 155.00	
Marketing	£ 110.00	Flyers, advertising
Office	£ 1468.56	Office supplies, Archive Materials, NMCS laptop
Open Days, Group Visits, Events	£ 450.83	All Visitor Costs
Utilities	£ 2052.99	Gas, Electricity, Mobile Phone
Development	£ 1842.05	Drying Room, Stamp Mill site
Website	£ 166.42	Hosting, Software costs
Other expenses	£ 680.27	AGM, NAMHO subscription, Donation to COMRU, AMBA subscription, Approved Routes, PayPal fees
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 10,918.18</b>	

Surplus for 2019/20	£ 2463.22
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Cash at Bank end of March 2020    £ 27,354.59

**Signed on behalf of the Trustees**



**24<sup>th</sup> August 2020**